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Research Article

A Grotesque/Ethnic Figurine Fragment from Ballicaoluk Settlement at Mount Nif (Olympos)

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Abstract

Ballicaoluk, one of the excavation areas of the Mount Nif (Olympos) Excavation, is a fortified settlement within the borders of Vişneli village in Kemalpaşa (Nymphaion), on the east side of Mt. Nif. The settlement, excavated from 2008 on, has yielded finds from the end from the 8th century BCE to the Byzantine Period. Settlements and necropoleis at Mt. Nif, which are not mentioned in ancient sources, are located in the Ionia-Lydia border. This paper deals with the possible production site and cultural context of a terracotta figurine fragment (inventory number: Nif.PT.22-1) recovered from a house within the settlement. Alongside the examination of the fragment, the other finds (pottery, metal finds and coins) from the residential area in Ballicaoluk settlement, and other figurine fragments from the necropolis in Dağkızılca nearby, are taken into consideration. With reference to the building phases of the house and on stylistic grounds, the figurine fragment has been dated to the 3rd to mid-2nd century BCE. Although local clay pottery fragments are known, there is no evidence of figurine or figurine mould production in the vicinity of Mt. Nif. The results of the XRD analysis were compared with the results of other figurine producing centres and with samples taken from the neighbouring clay deposits (Bozköy), and from these a proposal is presented for the possible production site. The interactions between influential workshops in the region in terms of style and subject, and the previously published figurine fragments from Dağkızılca and Ballicaoluk, indicate the influence of the Smyrna-Ephesus-Pergamon workshops. Although the grotesque/ethnic type figurine fragment from Ballicaoluk is similar to the figurine "attributed to Smyrnaean", it is similar to the Ephesus type 2 and type 4 in terms of clay structure. When both the style and clay structure of Ballicaoluk figurine fragment are evaluated, as well as the small terracotta finds and figurine fragments from Dağkızılca are taken into consideration, it has been observed that there was cultural and commercial interaction with Smyrna and Ephesus during the Hellenistic Period.

Keywords: Nif, terracotta, figurine, grotesque, ethnic, XRD.

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Araştırma Makalesi

Nif (Olympos) Dağı Balıcaoluk Yerleşimi'nden Grotesk/Etnik Bir Figürin

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Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

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Dergide yayınlanan makalelerin bilimsel ve hukuki sorumluluğu tamamen yazar(lar)ına aittir.

Nif (Olympos) Dağı kazı alanlarından biri olan Balıcaoluk, Nif Dağı'nın doğusunda Kemalpaşa'nın (Nymphaion) Vişneli mahallesi sınırları içerisinde tahkimli bir tepe yerleşimidir. 2008 yılından beri kazısı yapılan yerleşim MÖ 8. yüzyıl sonundan Bizans Dönemi'ne kadar buluntu vermektedir. Konumuzu oluşturan pişmiş toprak figürin parçası (envanter numarası: Nif.PT.22-1) ise konut kazısından ele geçmiş olup olası üretim yeri ve dönemin kültür yapısındaki konumu hakkında bir değerlendirme yapılacaktır. Yapılan değerlendirmede, Balıcaoluk konut kazısından diğer buluntular (pişmiş toprak kaplar, metal buluntular ve sikkeler) ile yakınındaki Dağkızılca nekropolisinde bulunan figürin parçaları da ele alınmıştır. Balıcaoluk figürini, stil açısından değerlendirilerek ve konutun evreleri de göz önünde bulundurularak MÖ 3.-2. yüzyıl ortalarına tarihlendirilmiştir. Yerel kilden üretilmiş kap parçaları bilinmesine karşın, Nif Dağı çevresinde figürin üretimiyle ilgili bir bulgu henüz ele geçmemiştir. Yapılan XRD analiz sonucu buluntumuz diğer figürin üreticisi merkezlerin analiz sonuçlarıyla ve çevredeki kil yataklarından (Bozköy) alınan örneklerle karşılaştırılmış, olası üretim yeri hakkında öneride bulunulmuştur. Terrakotta atölyelerinin başka atölyelerden stil ve konu açısından etkilendikleri bilinmektedir. Bununla birlikte Dağkızılca ve Balıcaoluk'tan daha önce yayınlanmış figürin parçaları göz önüne alındığında, Balıcaoluk figürininin Smyrna-Ephesus-Pergamon atölyeleri etkisinde olduğu söylenebilir. Grotesk/etnik tip figürin parçası ise "Smyrna'ya atfedilen" figürin ile benzerlik taşısa da kil yapısı bakımından Ephesus tip 2 ve tip 4'e daha yakındır. Balıcaoluk figürin parçası stil ve kil yapısı bakımından değerlendirildiğinde, alanda ve yakın çevresinde bulunan pişmiş toprak küçük buluntular ile Dağkızılca'da bulunan figürin parçaları dikkate alındığında, antik yerleşimin Hellenistik Dönem'de Smyrna ve Ephesus ile kültürel ve ticari etkileşimde olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nif, terracotta, figürin, grotesk, etnik, XRD.

Introduction

The fortified hilltop settlement of Ballicaoluk is located on Mount Nif (Olympos), east of the Gulf of Izmir, at the borders of the counties of Bornova, Buca, Kemalpaşa and Torbalı. The Karabel and Belkahve mountain passes on the ancient road network provided transportation between Smyrna, Sardis and Ephesus; therefore the location of Ballicaoluk was significant in controlling the Torbalı -Kemalpaşa road, and also the Karabel Pass (fig. 1). The Mt. Nif (Olympos) excavation has been carried out since 2006 at Karamattepe, Dağkızılca and Başpınar. The excavations at Ballicaoluk began in 2008 and on residential area since 2012 (fig. 2). Prior to the excavation, excursions (1999-2001) and archaeological surveys (2004-2005) were carried out by Prof. Dr. E. T. Tulunay from Istanbul University.

The terracotta figurine fragment (Nif.PT.22-1), the focus of this article, was unearthed during the house excavations at Ballicaoluk. (fig. 1-4). Considering the pottery and the small finds found during the archaeological surveys and excavations carried out in Ballicaoluk¹ between 1999-2023, the occupation phases of the settlement are dated from the Late Geometric to the Byzantine period².

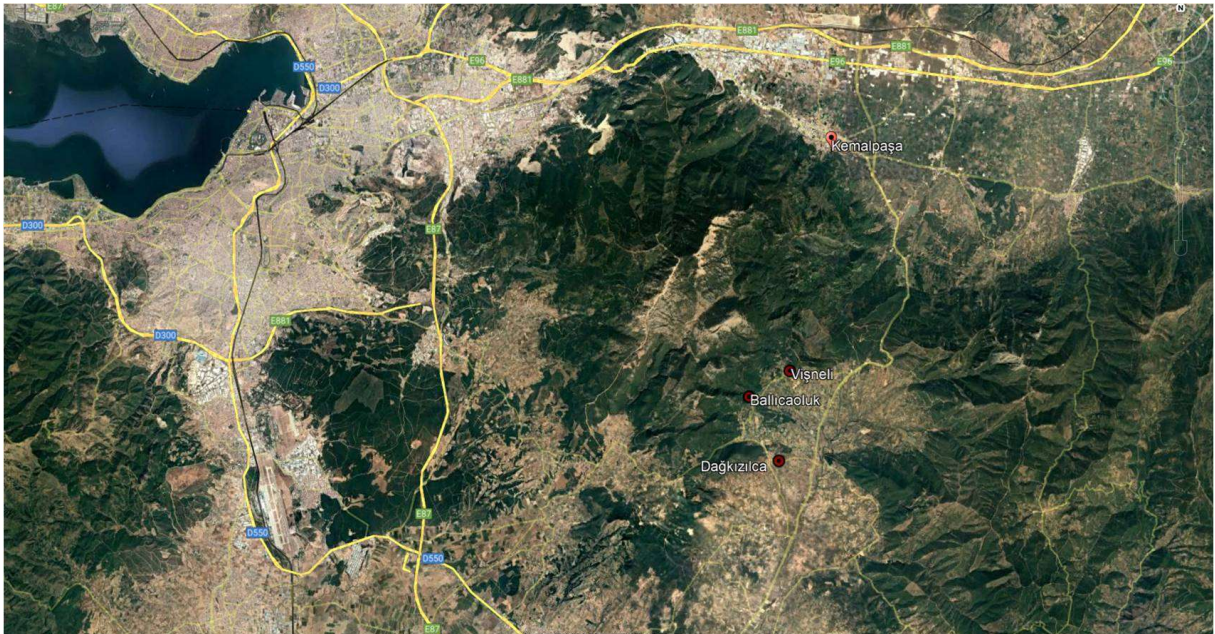


Figure 1: Ballicaoluk on Mt. Nif (Olympos)

The grotesque/ethnic type figurine fragment was found from the excavation of a house dated between the late 4th - mid 2nd century BCE. Considered together with the finds from the Dağkızılca necropolis, it is a unique example from a settlement at the intersection of different cultural regions³. Grotesque/ethnic type figurines yield significant evidence about the social life of its era and interactions with the surrounding cities.

In addition to the results of the XRD analyses, stylistic examination was used for identifying cultural and trade relations of different workshops and of the settlement itself. It

¹ For more information about Ballicaoluk finds and excavation, controlling the road to Smyrna and Karabel Pass, see Meriç 1988, 207-208; Doğer and Gezgin 1998, 14; Meriç 2009, 68-69; Türkmen 2011, 264; Türkmen-Peker 2015, 19-27; Peker 2017, 6.

² For the finds before the Late Antiquity see, Bilgin 2017, 32-38; for Late Antique and Byzantine Periods, see Tulunay 2010, 400-401, 408, fig. 10.

³ Previously published figurines found at the same residential area excavation, for the figurine in mantle see, Bulgurlu-Gün 2017, 111-113; for the heads of Aphrodite and Eros (?), Tulunay *et al.* 2020, 18, fig. 10a-b.

is thought that the XRD results of the figurine fragment and the sample taken from the Bozköy⁴ clay deposit will be a step for future analyses, and provide identification of possible clay deposits and workshops, and provide evidence for the exploration of commercial-cultural interactions within the wider geographical area.

Aim and Method

This grotesque/ethnic type figurine fragment is notable because it was found in a small settlement, close to the figurine-producing centers in Western Anatolia, and is an original example of an odd genre (fig. 3-4). A significant quantity of the figurines from excavations at the Mt. Nif were found from the Dağkızılca necropolis, and differ from the figurines from the Ballicaoluk settlement in terms of date, quantity and style.

The figurine fragment was studied in regards to its production technique, style, and fabric. Workshop identification and dating have been established through comparisons with excavation finds, firstly from neighbouring areas (Smyrna, Ephesus, Pergamon, Myrina, Priene), and further afield to other locations where similar examples are found. Research has also been carried out in museum catalogues. Additionally, data obtained from coins, pottery, and metal finds found in Ballicaoluk were taken into consideration for dating purposes.

Clay analyses, which have become more important in recent years, have been taken into consideration along with the production technique and artistic features, alongside the contexts in which grotesque, caricature or ethnic type figurines were found. XRD analysis of the clay samples and stylistic comparisons were made in order to provide a starting point for the identification of the workshop. The samples taken from other figurines and pottery fragments found during the excavations at Ballicaoluk and other excavation areas at Mt. Nif were compared with the samples taken from the clay deposit at Bozköy.

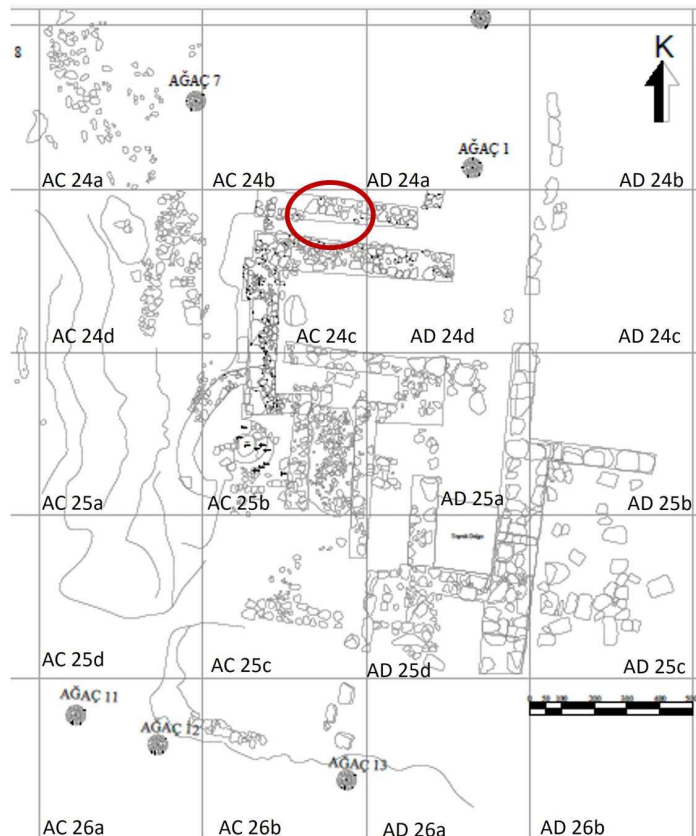


Figure 2: Plan of Ballicaoluk dwelling and findspot (Mt. Nif (Olympos) Excavation archive)

Findspot and Purpose of Grotesque/Ethnic Type Figurines

Figurines defined as caricature and pathological (body deformation or psychological disorder), were evaluated within the grotesque⁵ group, and ethnic type figurines were

⁴ Bozköy village in Torbalı is located about 10 km south of Ballicaoluk.

⁵ Smyrnaean grotesques were evaluated in three groups pathological (body deformation and physiological illness), ethnic type or gender issue (exaggerate particular physical characteristic), and the third group with

evaluated within the “realistic” group. Without context, the purpose and certain date of the terracotta figurines cannot be identified⁶. These groups have been depicted in various forms of art, such as vase paintings, small sculptures, mosaics, frescoes etc., spanning from the Archaic to the Roman Imperial period⁷. Additionally, deities like Bes, Priapos and Telesphoros were often portrayed with exaggerated features, including a large belly or phallos (*ithyphallic*) before the Hellenistic period. One of the earliest known examples of a grotesque terracotta figurine displaying pathological features is a male figure with missing limbs, discovered in Sicily and dated to the 7th or 6th century BCE⁸.



Figure 3: Left and front of Nif.PT.22-1 (*Mt. Nif (Olympos) Excavation archive*)

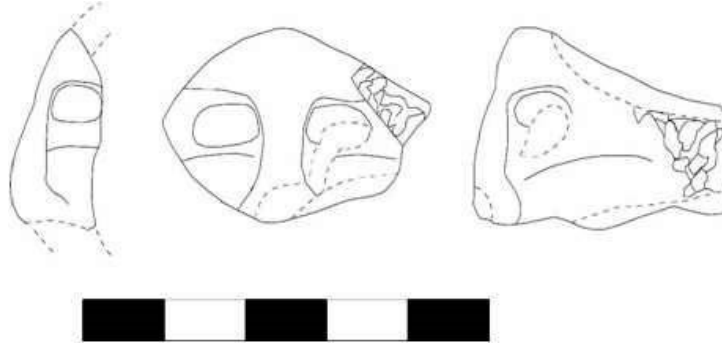


Figure 4: Left, front and right side drawings of Nif.PT.22-1 (*Mt. Nif (Olympos) Excavation archive*)

During the Hellenistic period, grotesque art gained popularity throughout the Greek world and was also presented for the entertainment of both gods and house guests⁹. Similarly, during this period, figures with distinct ethnic features were utilized for similar purposes, often portrayed with comical facial expressions, or depicted in ailing and unwell condition. Examples include the terracotta statue “an African withdrawing a thorn from the sole of his foot” found in Priene (parody of the bronze sculpture “Spinario” or “Boy with Thorn”)¹⁰, as well as portrayal of large-bellied black characters in vase paintings, which

exaggerated caricature expression, see Hasselin-Rous *et al.* 2009, 170-173; Hasselin-Rous 2019, 181.

⁶ Süvegh 2014, 143; Süvegh 2017, 179-182.

⁷ Merker 2000, 194-195; Mitchell 2016, 184; Meintani 2022, 23, fig. 7.

⁸ Meintani 2022, 23, fig. 7.

⁹ Atalay 1983, 6; Pollitt 1986, 142; Merker 2000, 194-195; Rumscheid 2006, 292.

¹⁰ Terracotta figurine of Priene (Antikensammlung Staatliche Museum, Berlin, TC 8626), Spinario sculpture (British Museum, Inv. No: 1880,0807).

caricatured ethnic groups within the Greek world¹¹. People may also have presented these figurines as offerings to the sanctuaries of Asklepios and other healing deities to recover from illness¹². *Phallos* or exaggerated phallic depictions (*ithyphallos*) might have been used for warding off demons or evil eyes, or for the furthering of fertility or wealth, alongside ugly and pathological figurines¹³.

Most of the grotesque figurines were found in household shrines, shops or *oikos*, *andron*, and no grotesque figurines have yet been found in the excavated necropoleis in Western Anatolia. Figurines have been found in many settlements and sanctuaries in Italy, but very few grotesque examples have been identified. The necropolis figurines at Sciatbi and Hadra (Alexandria) in Egypt are also not of the grotesque type, as in the necropoleis of Greece, Italy and Asia Minor¹⁴.

The Context of the Fragment

Ballicaoluk is located on a hilltop within a forested area, this has led to many of the Finds being damaged by moisture and vegetation thus most of the ceramic finds are found fragmentary and worn.

Although pottery dating back to the second half of the 8th - 7th centuries BCE was found in Ballicaoluk, no architectural remains from this period have been unearthed as yet¹⁵. Some pottery sherds (including oil lamps) were recovered from the excavation of a house from the upper debris and lowest stratum (floor deposit) dated to the 6th century BCE, but no architectural remains from this period can be identified. For this reason, the house dated between late 4th - mid 2nd century BCE.

The terracotta figurine fragment was found in the northeast of trench AC24c (520,49-520,38 m) and is broken on all four sides. When found its surface was covered with calcareous deposits (fig. 3). The sherds found within the same layer as the figurine fragment (AC24c) are dated to 3rd - mid 2nd century BCE. This dating is determined through the context and associated finds (coins, metal finds, pottery sherds, etc.) from other trenches within the residential area¹⁶.

Technique and Clay Analysis

Technique: The figurine fragment is mould made but the eye was formed by hand with a small device. The preserved part of the figurine is 2.5 cm in height, 3.1 cm in width and 0.7-1.5 cm in thickness. Since it is fragmentary, we do not know the artistic traits of its back or details regarding the vent hole. A detailed or roughly modelled back section or the shape of a vent hole can point to a particular artistic style or even a single potential workshop.

Clay: Pale orange (5 YR 5/8 yellowish red) tone and hard (can not be scratched with fingernail). Rare and very fine golden micaceous inclusions, more abundant on the surface. The clay contains a dense and very fine black, brownish-red admixture. Pores are very rare and small. No slip residue or glaze visible on the surface. The local clay exhibits a dusty

¹¹ Rumscheid 2006, 294-295; Mitchell 2016, 184-185; Trentin 2016, 24-25.

¹² Uhlenbrock 1990, 77-78; Sayın 2018, 32; discussion on the use of models by medical students, Mitchell 2013, 287-288; Süvegh 2017, 180.

¹³ Wace 1903/04, 109-110; Mitchell 2013, 291; Voegtli 2016, 6-9.

¹⁴ Meintani 2022, 20-21.

¹⁵ Bilgin 2015, 27-28 pl. I, 5; Bilgin 2017, 34-93.

¹⁶ Bilgin 2017, 38-49, 61-93; for the finds from trenches AD25a and AD25d, see Peker *et al.* 2022, 357-358, 366, fig. 7; Peker *et al.* 2023, 190-191, 201, fig. 10; for an assesment of the coins from other trenches in the excavation of Ballicaoluk house, see Lenger 2017, 114-118; for metal finds, see Baykan 2017, 119-134.

surface with coarse and very fine silver micaceous and lime inclusions, the colours are red, pale yellowish brown and grey hues¹⁷. Local pottery was also found from Ballicaoluk and the other excavation sites of the Mt. Nif Excavation (Karamattepe, Dağkızılca, and probably Başpınar) but there is no evidence of figurine production and moulds.

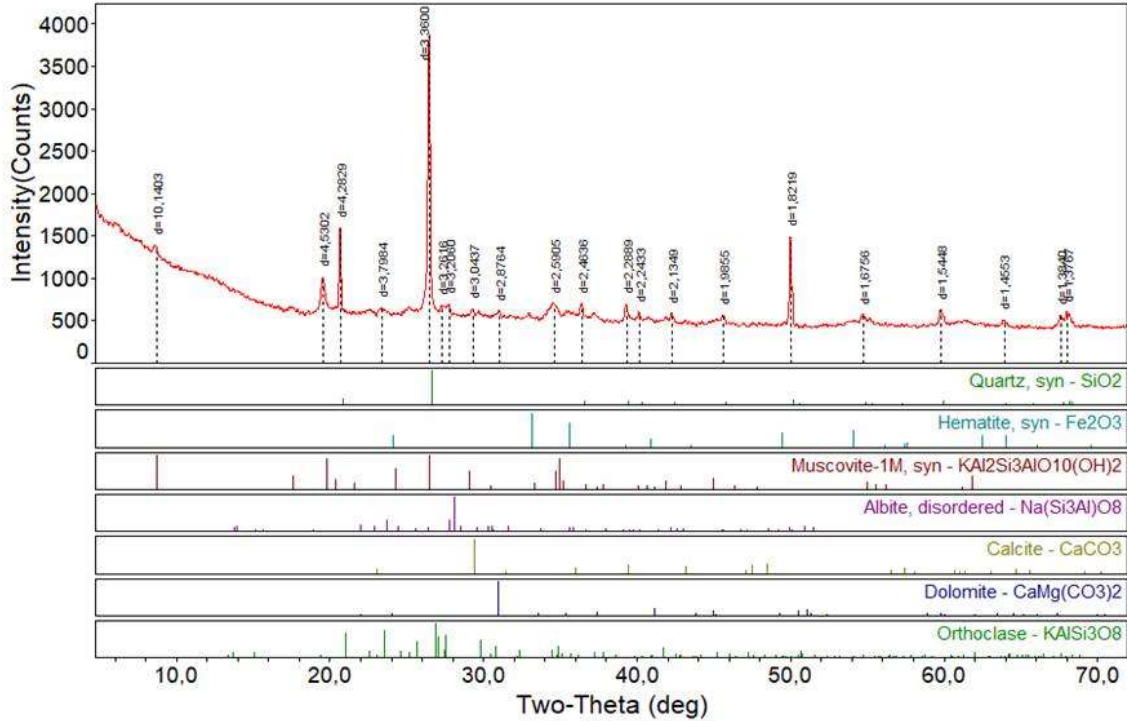


Figure 5: XRD analysis result of Ballicaoluk figurine fragment

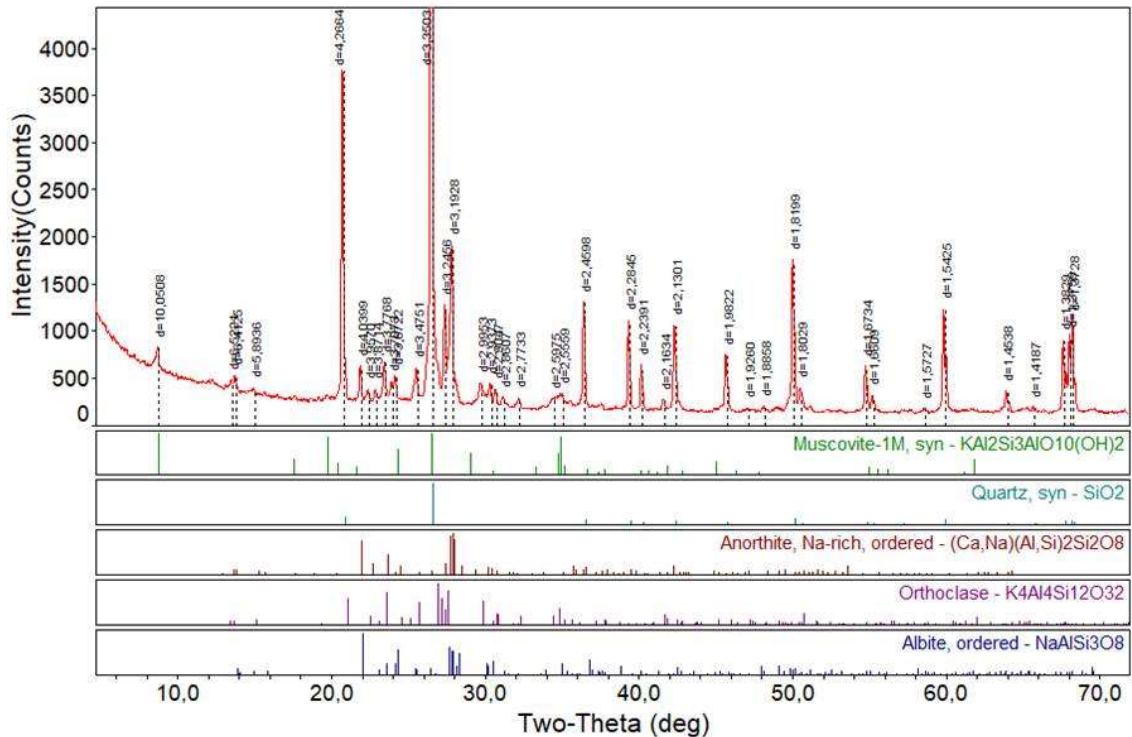


Figure 6: XRD analysis result of raw sample taken from Bozköy clay deposit

¹⁷ Bilgin 2015, 34-35; Bilgin 2017, 45.

Clay Analyses: XRD (X-Ray Diffraction) analyses were made on the pottery samples from the Mt. Nif excavations to determine their mineralogical composition. The analyses were made on fractions of approximately 0.5-10 grams, which were randomly selected to ensure particle orientation, and placed in sample holders. These samples were prepared from moisture-extracted specimens and ground to below 75 microns in size. The analyses were carried out at the ITU Department of Geology XRD Laboratory using a “Bruker D8 Advance” model powder X-ray diffraction (P-XRD) instrument. The X-ray diffraction was conducted using Cu K α radiation with an applied current and voltage of 40 mA and 40 kV, respectively, without a filter. The measurements were performed with a step speed of 2° 2 θ /min in the 0°-72° 2 θ range, using a Lynxeye detector. Following the analyses, the obtained X-ray diffractograms were analyzed using the “Jade 6.5” data evaluation program (MDI, California-USA) with the assistance of the “PDF-2” database.

As a result of this XRD analysis of the Ballicaoluk figurine fragment displayed the following the mineralogical composition (fig. 5): Quartz (SiO₂), Hematite (Fe₂O₃), Muscovite (KAl₂Si₃AlO₁₀(OH)₂), Albite (Na(Si₃Al)O₈), Calcite (CaCO₃), Dolomite (CaMg(CO₃)₂), Orthoclase (KAlSi₃O₈).

Elements contained in: Potassium (K), Si (silisium), Fe (iron), Mg (magnesium), Al (aluminium), Ca (calsium), Cobalt (CO), Sodium (Na).

The mineralogical composition of the raw sample taken from Bozköy clay deposit (fig. 6): Muscovite (KAl₂Si₃AlO₁₀(OH)₂), Quartz (SiO₂), Anorthite ((Ca,Na)(Al, Si)₂Si₂O₈), Orthoclase (K₄Al₄Si₁₂O₃₂), Albite (NaAlSi₃O₈).

Elements contained in: Potassium (K), Aluminium (Al), Silisium (Si), sodium (Na), calsium (Ca).

Analyses on the Smyrna samples (carried out with ICPAES/ICP-M) were taken from two different figurine groups and Roman Imperial period pottery fragments. Silisium (Si), iron (Fe), magnesium (Mg), aluminium (Al), calsium (Ca), potassium (K), sodium (Na), titanium (Ti), manganese (Mn) were detected in the samples. The same elements were found in different percentages in Roman pottery fragments, and two figurine groups of Smyrna¹⁸.

Style and Possible Production Place

This terracotta figurine fragment, with its broad forehead, wide eyes, flattened and splayed nose and puffy cheeks, can be considered within the group of grotesque, caricature or realistic types with ethnic features, a style frequently encountered in the Hellenistic period¹⁹.

Alexander the Great and his successors interacted with diverse cultures and places, which led to the emergence of different influences in sculpture and other arts in the Hellenistic period²⁰. In this period, depictions of real life people such as the elderly slaves, boxers, drunks, fishermen, victims of disease, dwarfs²¹, beggars, and Africans²² became

¹⁸ For detailed information on the sample groups and elemental ratios selected for Smyrnaean clay analysis, Bouquillon *et al.* 2010, 322-325.

¹⁹ “Grotesque” is divided as “pathological” and “unpathological”, caricature and ethnic are assumed “unpathological” see, Rumscheid 2006, 290; Smyrnaean figurine classification for “grotesque” and “realistic-ethnic type” were divided in principal two groups, the evaluation based on the Istanbul Archaeological Museum catalogue so that the classification different from the general Smyrnaean grotesque finds (see fn. 6), Hasselin-Rous *et al.* 2015, 94-120, 172-193; Male and female old people with ugly and distorted face and face with grimaces, Africans, herdsmen, boxers etc., according to Kielau these are so-called “grotesque” group and he discusses at “ideal non-beauty (idealer Nicht-Schönheit ?), Kielau 2020, 112-113, 117-118, 360.

²⁰ Higgins 1967, 95; Miller-Ammerman 1990, 37-38; Smith 2002, 9; Kielau 2020, 118.

²¹ Representation of dwarf in Greek art, culture and cult meaning from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period see,

subjects of art besides that of the Classical idea of “ideal beauty”. Smyrna, Tarsus and Alexandria were well known production centres of terracotta figurines related to everyday life, with the grotesque and caricatured in Egypt and Western Anatolia²³. Moreover Cyme, Larisa, Troia, Sardis, Myrina, Pergamon, Ephesus, and Priene had also produced terracotta figurines. In Ephesus and Priene²⁴ the grotesque and the caricature figurines were limited and not the main themes²⁵.

It is known that the Pergamene School of Hellenistic sculpture influenced the surrounding poleis and workshops, and Myrina was also influenced by Pergamene art²⁶. In addition, Smyrna was an important producer of figurines influenced by the workshops of Pergamon and Ephesus, although there were technical differences²⁷. Smyrna was also a prominent centre in Western Anatolia, especially in terms of the production of grotesque, caricature and ethnic type figurines.

When this figurine fragment is compared through its clay fabric, production technique, style, and size, it corresponds closely with the romper blower figurine with its wide forehead, and large nose, and belongs to the realistic-ethnic type from Smyrna (fig. 3-4, 7). The person depicted with exaggerated ethnic features may represent a hunchbacked African slave²⁸. It is noted above that Ephesus was also one of the manufacturers of grotesque figurines, and similar finds were produced there in the Hellenistic period²⁹. On the other hand the researchers classified “Smyrnaean” and “attributed to Smyrna” figurines under mainly two classes, the one of them the “realistic and ethnic group” and the other the grotesque³⁰. The clay is very similar to the figurine “attributed to Smyrna” with its well-fired, low mica content, but the black and brownish red mixture differs from Smyrnaean clay (fig. 7)³¹. Similarly, Ephesian clay types, especially type 2 and type 4, are similar to the Ballicaoluk figurine fragment. However, in terms of style, it is more similar to the “attributed to Smyrnaean” type.

Assessment and Conclusion

The stylistic analysis of figurine fragments from Dağkızılca, the grotesque/ethnic type figurine (Nif.PT.22-1), and the previously published figurine fragments found in Ballicaoluk shows that they may have been produced in the workshops of Pergamon, Myrina, Smyrna, Ephesus, and Priene. These workshops influenced each other in terms of style and subject.

The grotesque/ethnic type figurines from Ballicaoluk could potentially have been imported from Smyrna or produced in Ephesus under the influence of the Smyrnaean style.

Dasen 1993, 225-241, 246-248.

²² Hunchback figures could be represented African people and spreaded the Hellenistic world, Havelock 1981, 120-121.

²³ Higgins 1967, 111-112, 117; Connelly 1990, 90; Uhlenbrock 1990, 77; Burn and Higgins 2001, 128, 159; Süvegh 2014, 143; thematically and technically extensive information and comparison between Smyrna and Tarsus grotesque figurines see, Hasselin-Rous 2019, 180-184.

²⁴ Smyrnaean grotesque terracotta and its effect on Priene workshop see, Rumscheid 2006, 294.

²⁵ Higgins 1967, 111-122; Uhlenbrock 1990, 79; Kielau 2020, 360.

²⁶ About the influence of Pergamon sculpture style on the terracotta figurines around close territorium and cities see, Burr-Thompson 1963, 15; for detailed information on the workshop relationship of the two cities through Pergamon and Myrina figurine productions see, Töpperwein 1976, 171; Kielau 2020, 221-222.

²⁷ Ephesos, Smyrna, Myrina resemblance, see Besques 1972, 123; Atalay 1983, 6.

²⁸ Hasselin-Rous *et al.* 2015, 172-173 pl. XIV fig. 122.

²⁹ Atalay 1983, 5-6; Lang-Auinger 2003, 209-213; Hasselin-Rous *et al.* 2015, 172-173, pl. XIV fig. 122.

³⁰ Researchers divides the Smyrnaean figurines into two main groups, “Smyrnaean” and “attributed to Smyrna”, Hasselin-Rous *et al.* 2015, 7; for the two figurines groups are deals with “realistic-ethnic” and “grotesque” classification see, fn. 6 and fn. 20.

³¹ More knowledge of Smyrnaean clay see, Besques 1972, 155; Hasselin-Rous *et al.* 2015, 9-10.

Considering the imported pottery in Ballicaoluk from Ephesus, Priene, Pergamon, Smyrna and Sardis, it is possible to say that it was culturally influenced by Smyrna and Ephesus. In particular, it is quite possible that Ballicaoluk and Mt. Nif (Olympos) which are located on the road network connecting Ephesus to Sardis and with Smyrna to inland regions and Sardis are in the Smyrna-Ephesus cultural environment.



Figure 7: Attributed to Smyranean African slave (?) (Hasselin-Rous et al. 2015: pl. XIV, 122)

When the grotesque/ethnic type figurines of Ballicaoluk and Smyrna are compared, it is seen that there are similarities in terms of style, as well as differences in the clay fabric. The similarities with Ephesus type 2 and type 4 clays should be taken into consideration. Although local pottery sherds were found during the Mt. Nif excavations and surveys, no figurines or figurine moulds have been found to be produced from local clay.

While the phases of the house are dated between the ends of the 4th century to the mid-2nd century BCE, the figurine fragment can be dated to late 3rd to mid-2nd century BCE considering the stratigraphy and context. Based on the contexts of different settlements in the region, we can suggest that the terracotta figurine from Ballicaoluk may have been used to entertain the deities and house guests, or protection from the evil eye, and to encourage fertility and wealth within the domestic cult.

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